2026-27 TSSAA Handbook

SENIOR HIGH BASKETBALL REGULATIONS

I. CLASSIFICATION PLANS

In Division I, TSSAA schools shall be divided into four classes for basketball tournament play. In Division II, there shall be two classifications.

II. GENERAL REGULATIONS

A. It is recommended that meetings for planning tournaments not be scheduled during school hours. If such meetings are held during school hours, the district coordinator calling the meeting should have the approval of the superintendents of all schools involved. It is also recommended that tournament games not be scheduled during school hours except in cases of emergency and then only by approval of the state office.

B. The tournament director may award nets to the winning team if requested by the coach. The tournament director shall supervise the removal of the nets. The nets shall be taken down at the discretion of the director after most of the crowd has left the gymnasium and the director shall award the nets to the winning team in the dressing room.

C. The allowance of videotaping, filming, or streaming of regular season contests is left to the discretion of the administration of the host school (or the game administrator if there is no host school). Videotaping, filming, or streaming of postseason contests must be in accordance with the TSSAA Media Regulations and must be approved by the Tournament Director.

D. No explosive devices shall be allowed for regular-season or tournament games. In addition, no air horns, cow bells, sirens, clackers, cans with marbles or rocks inside or any other artificial noise makers are allowed.

E. In the fourth quarter, there is a mandated continuous clock when one team gets a 35 point advantage over their opponent. The clock would only stop for shooting fouls, timeouts, injuries, and the administration of technical fouls. The clock will continue to run for the remainder of the game, regardless of the point differential.

F. Game Administrator Meeting: TSSAA Board of Control policy requires that a Game Administrator be appointed by the principal of each host school to supervise every varsity basketball contest. The Game Administrator must be someone other than the participating coaches. Ideally it should be the principal, athletic director, or another school administrator, but it may be the principal's or athletic director's designee due to staff commitments.

The Game Administrator of the host school, is required to conduct one meeting which must include the coaches, officials, and security personnel prior to the start of each varsity basketball contest. Included in the pregame discussion is to be a review of the expected behavior of everyone involved in the contest. This should be a very positive meeting that sets the tone for an enjoyable contest.

G. In divisions where schools are classified into districts, a school that fails to schedule a district opponent or refuses to play a district opponent during the regular season without just cause as determined by the state office shall forfeit the contest and shall not be eligible to compete for a championship in that sport during that year. The same shall apply in divisions where schools are classified into regions

H. Shot Clock - TSSAA will begin a phased implementation of the 35-second shot clock during the 2026–27 school year, with full implementation scheduled for the 2029-30 school year. Schools choosing to use the shot clock during the transition should review the TSSAA Shot Clock Implementation Guidelines for rules, procedures, and equipment expectations.

I. To ensure all contests begin at the scheduled time, all pre-game activities—including, but not limited to, the National Anthem, team introductions, and any recognition ceremonies—should be concluded and the playing court cleared prior to the scheduled tip-off.

The pre-game countdown clock should be set with sufficient time to complete these activities, ensuring the game commences at its scheduled time.

III. COUNTY, CONFERENCE, INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

A. County, conference and invitational tournaments must be approved in writing by the Executive Director. The tournament must be approved in writing prior to the start of the tournament (Contact Kim Alley – kalley@tssaa.org).

B. Schools that enter county, conference and invitational tournaments shall be charged with two games for each tournament in which they participate. A member school shall not participate in more than three such tournaments.

IV. TOURNAMENT PLANS (Division I)

A. District Tournaments

1. Selection of the tournament site, financial arrangements, and other plans for conducting the district tournaments shall be made or approved by the Principals and/or Athletic Directors of the schools in the district. This meeting shall be called by the district coordinator.

In selecting the site of the district tournament, consideration should be given to the facility that is in the best interest of the schools involved, the participants, and spectators.

In order to be considered as a district tournament site, the facility must meet the following minimum seating criteria: Class 1A – 1,000; Class 2A – 1,000, Class 3A – 1,250; Class 4A – 1,500. These are to be permanent seats and based on 18" width.

a. If a school that does not meet the minimum seating requirement is scheduled to host, the administration may select a larger facility in their area that meets the minimum requirement and inform the state office as to where the contest will be played.

b. If a school that is chosen to host a tournament game does not have the gym that satisfies the seating minimum, the Principal of that school may seek a waiver of the seating requirement from the Executive Director, and the waiver will be granted if the Principal establishes that waiving the seating requirement will not give rise to any substantial safety concerns.

2. The director of the district tournament shall be designated by the administrator of the host school.

3. All expenses in the district tournament must be approved by a majority vote of the schools in the district prior to the beginning of the tournament. If a tournament administration fee is to be paid, the amount must be approved by a majority vote of the schools in the district prior to the beginning of the tournament and shall not exceed $25.00 per game.

4. If the majority of district schools vote not to hold a district tournament, the administrators of the district schools may select schools to represent that district in the regional tournament.

5. District draws in all four classes shall be determined by the participating teams.

6. On nights where school is in session the next day (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday), there may be no more than two games played per night per site.

7. There shall be two districts in each region. The first, second, third, and fourth place teams from each district shall advance to the regional tournament.

B. Regional Tournaments

1. Districts must be completed by the date set by the Board on Control.

2. District coaches shall select their regional tournament site on a rotation basis. In odd-numbered years, the odd-numbered districts in basketball (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15) shall select the regional tournament site. In even-numbered years, the even-numbered district shall select the regional tournament site. The district selecting the regional tournament site shall have three options for the regional tournament format:

a. Select a central tournament site for the semifinals from the pre-approved list of schools found at https://tnhs.us/24regionbksites. Should a school wish to serve as a central tournament site that does not appear on the pre-approved list schools, they can appeal to the Board of Control at the August, November or January meeting. Central tournament sites must meet the following seating criteria: Class 1A – 1,000; Class 2A – 1,000, Class 3A – 1,250; Class 4A – 1,500. These are to be permanent seats and based on 18" width.

b. The district champion may host the semifinals and finals provided there is mutual agreement from the administration of all schools in the region. If the host school does not meet the minimum seating requirements listed above, each school must be provided the same opportunity to purchase tickets. If paper tickets are used, the tickets must be divided equally among the participating teams.

c. Play all games (quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals) at the higher seed. If the seeds are the same, the games shall be played at the odd numbered districts in odd numbered years and vice versa for even numbered years. In the semifinals and finals, if the host school does not meet the minimum seating

requirements listed above, each school must be provided the same opportunity to purchase tickets. If paper tickets are used, the visiting school must be provided half of the tickets.

The administrators from the district selecting the regional tournament format shall select one of the aforementioned options above no later than the January Board of Control meeting. At the conclusion of the January Board of Control meeting, if a region has not notified the state office of its selected format, the tournament will proceed with all games being played at the higher seed (c).

3. On Friday, following the completion of the district tournament, there will be four quarterfinal girls' games with the Winner and Runner-Up teams from both districts hosting Fourth Place and Third Place teams from the other district. Example:

Site 1: Fourth District 2 @ Winner District 1
Site 2: Third District 2 @ Runner-Up District 1
Site 3: Fourth District 1 @ Winner District 2
Site 4: Third District 1 @ Runner-Up District 2

All games will be at 7:00 p.m. local time unless mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools to play at an earlier time. All expenses, including officials, 18% of the gate to TSSAA, etc., will be paid by the host school with the net receipts split 50/50 between the two schools.

4. On Saturday, following the completion of the district tournament, there will be four quarterfinal boys' games with the Winner and Runner-Up teams from both districts hosting the Fourth Place and Third Place teams from the other district. Example:

Site 1: Fourth District 2 @ Winner District 1
Site 2: Third District 2 @ Runner-Up District 1
Site 3: Fourth District 1 @ Winner District 2
Site 4: Third District 1 @ Runner-Up District 2

All games will be at 7:00 p.m. local time unless mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools to play at an earlier time. All expenses, including officials, 18% of the gate to TSSAA, etc., will be paid by the host school with the net receipts split 50/50 between the two schools.

5. The quarterfinal winners will advance to a central site with the following format:

Monday: 2 Girls' Semifinal Games (6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. local time unless mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools to play at an earlier time)
Tuesday: 2 Boys' Semifinal Games (6:00 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. local time unless mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools to play at an earlier time)
Wednesday: Girls' Championship (7:00 p.m. local time unless mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools to play at an earlier time)
Thursday: Boys' Championship (7:00 p.m. local time unless mutually agreed upon by the administration of both schools to play at an earlier time)

If there is mutual agreement to change the game time, the host school shall notify the game officials and the state office of the change.

If all four schools in the same district advance to the semi-final round and it is not their year to host, the games must be moved to the alternate site. The alternate site must be determined by the schools within that particular district prior to the start of the regional tournament. The semi-final and final rounds must be played at the same site (Exception for the finals: Upon receiving written request, the state office is now allowed to approve changes to the site and/or game time due to the locations of the schools participating in the finals, as long as the schools competing and the host school all agree on the change.).

6. All expenses in the region tournament must be approved by a majority vote of the schools in the region prior to the beginning of the tournament. If a tournament administration fee is to be paid, the amount must be approved by a majority vote of the schools in the region prior to the beginning of the tournament and shall not exceed $25.00 per game.

7. The participating schools shall agree on a plan for distributing gate receipts, allowance for mileage to participating teams, fees for scorers and timers, amount allowed host schools, etc.

8. The regional tournament director shall be designated by the administrator of the host school.

9. The regional tournament director shall call a meeting of representatives of all schools that qualify for the regional tournament preceding the opening of the tournament for the transaction of necessary business. Time and place of this meeting shall be set by the regional tournament director, and the director shall notify the principals of the schools concerned.

10. A region, by a majority vote of all schools in the region, may present an alternative plan to the Board of Control no later than the January Board meeting different from #1 - #4 above for consideration. Consideration will be based on the history of the specific region tournament and its success and any information brought by the region to the Board of Control.

C. State Tournaments

1. State Tournament Bracket – In all three classes the first- and second-place teams in each regional tournament shall be eligible to enter the state tournament competition. The sectional games of the state tournament for boys and girls shall be as follows:

Site 1: Winner Region 1 vs. Second Region 2
Site 2: Winner Region 2 vs. Second Region 1
Site 3: Winner Region 3 vs. Second Region 4
Site 4: Winner Region 4 vs. Second Region 3
Site 5: Winner Region 5 vs. Second Region 6
Site 6: Winner Region 6 vs. Second Region 5
Site 7: Winner Region 7 vs. Second Region 8
Site 8: Winner Region 8 vs. Second Region 7

Drawing for play at the central tournament site shall be made following the sectional games. The draw shall be made so that two teams from the same region will be drawn to opposite brackets.

2. Sectional Sites – The Executive Director of TSSAA shall set the sectional sites in the area of the regional winner. In order to be considered as a sectional site, the facility must meet the following seating criteria: Class 1A – 1,000; Class 2A – 1,000, Class 3A – 1,250; Class 4A – 1,500. These are to be permanent seats and based on 18” width.

a. If a school that does not meet the minimum seating requirement is scheduled to host, the administration may select a larger facility in their area that meets the minimum requirement and inform the state office as to where the contest will be played.

b. If a school that is chosen to host a tournament game does not have the gym that satisfies the seating minimum, the Principal of that school may seek a waiver of the seating requirement from the Executive Director, and the waiver will be granted if the Principal establishes that waiving the seating requirement will not give rise to any substantial safety concerns.

3. In Sectional Basketball games, the visiting team shall have the opportunity to receive 50% of the tickets. Money or unsold tickets must be returned to the host school no later than 5:00 p.m. the day of the game.

4. In Sectional Basketball games, there must be space provided for the visiting team(s) official scorekeeper.

5. Practice at Tournament Site – There shall be no practice at the sectional or central tournament site. (Exception to this would be if a tournament or sectional site is the home floor of the participating team.)

V. TOURNAMENT PLANS (Division II)

A. Region Tournaments (Class A)

1. Selection of a tournament site, financial arrangements and other plans for conducting the region tournaments shall be made or approved by the Principals and/or Athletic Directors of the schools in the region. This meeting shall be called by the regional coordinator.

In selecting the site of the regional tournament, consideration should be given to the facility that is in the best interest of the schools involved, the participants, and spectators.

In order to be considered as a regional tournament site, the facility must meet the following minimum seating criteria: Division II Class A – 1,000; Division II Class AA – 1,250. These are to be permanent seats and based on 18” width.

a. If a school that does not meet the minimum seating requirement is scheduled to host, the administration may select a larger facility in their area that meets the minimum requirement and inform the state office as to where the contest will be played.

b. If a school that is chosen to host a tournament game does not have the gym that satisfies the seating minimum, the Principal of that school may seek a waiver of the seating requirement from the Executive Director, and the waiver will be granted if the Principal establishes that waiving the seating requirement will not give rise to any substantial safety concerns.

2. The director of the region tournament shall be designated by the administrator of the host school.

3. All expenses in the region tournament must be approved by a majority vote of the schools in the region prior to the beginning of the tournament. If a tournament administration fee is to be paid, the amount must be approved by a majority vote of the schools in the region prior to the beginning of the tournament and shall not exceed $25.00 per game.

4. On nights where school is in session the next day (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday), there may be no more than two games played per night per site.

5. There shall be three regions: East, Middle, and West.

B. State Tournament

1. In Class A, the top four teams from the East Region, the top four teams from the Middle, and top four teams from the West Region shall be eligible to enter the state tournament. The First Round sites shall be as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	#4 Middle @ #2 East	#4 Middle @ #3 West	#3 East @ #2 Middle
Site 2:	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)	#3 East vs. #2 West (H)	#4 Middle @ #2 West
Site 3:	#4 West @ #2 Middle	#4 West vs. #2 East (H)	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)
Site 4	#3 Middle @ #3 East	#3 Middle @ #4 East	#3 Middle @ #4 West

In 2026-27, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

In 2027-28, #1 Middle will host the #4 West vs. #2 East First Round game and #2 Middle will host the #3 East vs. #2 West game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

In 2028-29, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round Game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

The Quarterfinal Round sites shall be as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	FR Site 1 W @ #2 W	FR Site 1 W @ #1 E	FR Site 1 W @ #1 W
Site 2:	FR Site 2 W @ #1 M	FR Site 2 W @ #2 M	FR Site 2 W @ #2 E
Site 3:	FR Site 3 W @ #1 E	FR Site 3 W @ #1 M	FR Site 3 W @ #1 M
Site 4:	FR Site 4 W @ #1 W	FR Site 4 W @ #1 W	FR Site 4 W @ #1 E

The Executive Director has the authority to select another site if the host's facilities are not adequate to host the game.

The winners of the quarterfinal round games shall advance to the central tournament site.

The State Tournament shall be a four team single elimination tournament. If all three #1 Seeds advance to the central tournament site, the first matches of the state tournament shall be as follows:

Match 1: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner
Match 2: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

If all three #1 Seeds do not advance to the central tournament site, the bracket shall be set by the Executive Director upon completion of the quarterfinal round games.

2. In Class AA Boys, there will be an East Region, Middle Region, and West Region. The twelve teams that qualify for the post-season tournament shall be as follows: the top four teams from the East Region, the top five teams from the Middle Region, and the top three teams from the West Region. Seeding will be based on regular season records. The First Round sites shall be as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	#4 East @ #2 Middle	#5 Middle @ #2 East	#4 Middle @ #3 East
Site 2:	#3 East @ #3 Middle	#3 West @ #3 East	#5 Middle @ #2 West
Site 3:	#5 Middle @ #3 West	#4 East @ #3 Middle	#4 East @ #3 Middle
Site 4	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#3 West @ #2 East

The Quarterfinal Round sites shall be as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	FR Site 1 W @ #1 E	FR Site 1 W @ #1 W	FR Site 1 W @ #1 M
Site 2:	FR Site 2 W @ #2 W	FR Site 2 W @ #1 M	FR Site 2 W @ #1 E
Site 3:	FR Site 3 W @ #1M	FR Site 3 W @ #1 E	FR Site 3 W @ #1 W
Site 4:	FR Site 4 W @ #2 E	FR Site 4 W @ #2 M	FR Site 4 W @ #2 M

The Executive Director has the authority to select another site if the host's facilities are not adequate to host the game.

The winners of the quarterfinal round game shall advance to the central tournament site for a four team single elimination tournament. The first games of the state tournament for the boys' and girls' shall be as follows:

Semifinals: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner
Semifinals: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

3. In Class AA Girls, there will be an East Region, Middle Region, and West Region. The twelve teams that qualify for the post-season tournament shall be as follows: the top four teams from the East Region, the top five teams from the Middle Region, and the top three teams from the West Region. Seeding will be based on regular season records. The First Round sites shall be as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	#5 Middle @ #2 East	#4 East @ #3 East	#5 Middle @ #2 West
Site 2:	#4 Middle @ #3 East	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#4 Middle @ #3 West
Site 3:	#4 East @ #3 Middle	#3 West @ #3 Middle	#4 East @ #2 Middle
Site 4	#3 West @ #2 Middle	#5 Middle @ #2 East	#3 East @ #3 Middle

The Quarterfinal Round sites shall be as follows:

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	FR Site 1 W @ #1 W	FR Site 1 W @ #1 M	FR Site 1 W @ #1 E
Site 2:	FR Site 2 W @ #1 M	FR Site 2 W @ #1 E	FR Site 2 W @ #1 M
Site 3:	FR Site 3 W @ #1 E	FR Site 3 W @ #1 W	FR Site 3 W @ #2 E
Site 4:	FR Site 4 W @ #2 W	FR Site 4 W @ #2 M	FR Site 4 W @ #1 W

The Executive Director has the authority to select another site if the host's facilities are not adequate to host the game.

The winners of the quarterfinal round game shall advance to the central tournament site for a four team single elimination tournament. The first games of the state tournament for the boys' and girls' shall be as follows:

Semifinals: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner
Semifinals: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

VI. GENERAL TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

A. A tournament squad for the region, sectional, and state tournaments shall be limited to 15 players. This squad limit is recommended for all tournaments, but is not mandatory except for the region, sectional, and state tournament.

B. There shall be no practice at the sites of the sectionals or the state tournament. (Exception to this would be if a tournament site is the home floor of a participating team.)

C. No air horns, cow bells, megaphones, sirens, clackers, cans with marbles or rocks inside or individual type noise makers will be allowed in district, region, sectionals, and state tournaments. The use of artificial noisemakers is prohibited at all levels. Additionally, no explosive devices will be allowed in region, sectionals, and state tournaments.

A pep band shall be allowed at region and state tournaments provided the school band director or other faculty member is present and in charge of the band. Band members and directors shall be considered as fans and must purchase a ticket to enter the tournament.

D. For Division I district tournaments and the Division I region quarterfinals, the host school is to contact their local association to secure officials for their games. In Division I, officials for the region semifinals, sectionals and state tournament games will be assigned by the state office. For Division II district tournaments, region tournaments, and the first round, the host school is to contact their local association to secure officials for their games. In Division II, officials for the quarterfinals and state tournament games will be assigned by the state office.

E. Television

See the TSSAA Media Regulations for information regarding the telecast, both live and delayed, of tournament games.